

the area. A voucher specimen was collected (Regn No. ZSI A 9209, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata). We compared our specimen with three non-type specimens from Nongkhor, Thailand to confirm our identification. This specimen therefore constitutes the first record of this species from Mizoram.

Measurements of the specimen: Snout-vent length: 29.78 mm, Head length: 7.08 mm, Head width: 8.06 mm, Snout length: 4.04 mm, Eye diameter: 4.12 mm, Tympanum diameter: 1.62 mm, Inter-orbital length: 4.08 mm; Inter-narial length: 2.71 mm, Tibia length: 13.84 mm.

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20. ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF *OREONECTES (INDOREONECTES) EVEZARDI* DAY AND *O. (I.) KERALENSIS* RITA, BANARESCU AND NALBANT (PISCES: BALITORIDAE)

The genus *Oreonectes* includes four subgenera comprising of ten species (Banarescu, and Nalbant 1995) distributed in Southeastern China, Northeast and Southeast Asia, and Western and Central India. The subgenus *Indoreonectes* Rita, Banarescu and Nalbant comprising of two species, namely *evezardi* Day (1878) and *keralensis* Rita, Banarescu and Nalbant (1978), is endemic to India. The species are characterized by the combination of the following characters: an elongate body, prolongation of the anterior nostrils into long nasal barbels, incomplete lateral line system, pelvic origin in advance of dorsal fin insertion, a dorsal and ventral adipose crest on the caudal peduncle and a rounded or straight caudal fin.

O. (I.) evezardi described from Poona, Maharashtra in the northern Western Ghats is now known to have a wider distribution in the Krishna and Godavari basins, and in Madhya

Pradesh, in the Pachmarhi Hills of the Satpura Range. Chacko *et al.* (1954) reported its occurrence further south in the Mettur Dam of the Cauvery system in Tamil Nadu. Jayaram *et al.* (1982), while reporting on the fish fauna of the Cauvery system, remarked that they did not find the species, though reported earlier by Chacko *et al.* (*op. cit.*). Later, Jayaram (1999) and Menon (1999), have inadvertently omitted the Cauvery system from the distributional range of the species.

During routine faunistic surveys of conservation areas, one of us (SK) collected the species *evezardi* from the Biligiri Rangasamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary (BRTWLS) in Karnataka from a tributary of the Cauvery river. Six specimens ranging in length from 25 mm to 45 mm SL, were collected from the following localities in BRTWLS, namely Giriialla, Kabbanagatte and K. Gudi during February, 1999

and April, 2000. The specimens have been registered in the Reserve Collections of the Zoological Survey of India (Southern Regional Station). The present collection confirms the distribution of the species in the Cauvery river also. Incidentally, this is the first report of *evezardi* from Karnataka.

However, the specimens from BRTWLS exhibit some differences from the descriptions of Day (1875-1878), in having a more elongate and slender body and certain other differences in body proportions, as follows: Head length in Day's specimen is 5.5 times in TL, whereas in the present collections it is 4.68 - 4.95 times in TL. Body depth is 6 in Day's specimen (vs 7.3 - 8.1), caudal 5 times (vs 5.33 - 5.88) in TL. Pectoral fin is longer than head, reaching $\frac{3}{4}$ of the distance from pectoral to ventral fin origin, whereas in the specimens from BRTWLS the pectoral fins are shorter, reaching only a little more than half this distance. Though the proportion of eye in snout is given as 3 (also around 3 in the present collection), Day's figure shows a specimen with a smaller snout. The lateral line is said to be indistinct, while it is fairly prominent and extends to almost half the pectoral fin length in a smaller specimen and up to the pectoral tip in a larger specimen studied.

Hora and Law (1941) reported *evezardi* from Periyar River at Pambadumpara in Travancore Hills of Kerala and remarked on the variations exhibited in the colour pattern in this species. Subsequently, Rita *et al.* (1978) described *O. (I.) keralensis* from Periyar River at Pambadumpara, distinguishing the species from *evezardi* based on differences in colour pattern and relative lengths of nasal barbels. The nasal barbels are longer in *evezardi*, extending to middle of eye, whereas in *keralensis* it is said to be shorter reaching up to the anterior border of eye. The vertical bands on the body are broad and brown, and interrupted or incomplete, extending from the dorsal to the ventral side of the body in *evezardi*, whereas in *keralensis* these

are narrow, dark and entire on the upper half of the body, and often split below the lateral line into streaks or spots. Rita *et al.* (*op. cit.*) remarked on the probability of Hora and Law's specimens being *keralensis*. Menon (1987) included Pamba drainage in the distribution of *keralensis*, based on his study of fish collections from Sabarigiri hills.

A study of loaches from the earlier collections, especially from Cardamom Hills in southern Western Ghats by Dr. G.U. Kurup in 1969, from Sabarigiri Hills by Dr. R.S. Pillai in 1981 and recently in 1999 from Periyar river by Mr. Chandran and other collections received for identification from Muvattupuzha and Santhamparai have all revealed the presence of *keralensis* and not *evezardi* in these areas. We reiterate the view of Rita *et al.* (1978) that the species present in the Travancore Hills is *keralensis*. Also, the specimens reported as *evezardi* from Periyar by Chacko (1948) before the description of *keralensis* and those reported by Zacharias *et al.* (1996), mostly based on Chacko (*op. cit.*), could also be *keralensis*. Biju *et al.* (2000) reported the occurrence of this species in Eravikulam National Park and Muvattupuzha river, from the cold waters at an altitude of 1,050 m in Muvattupuzha river and at a range of 1,600-2,200 m in Periyar river. From the above records, the present distributional range of *keralensis* is in the Periyar drainage, the Muvattupuzha river down to the Pamba river in the southern Western Ghats.

It can be concluded that *evezardi* has a wider distribution in the Northern and Central Western Ghats above the Palghat gap and in the Satpura Range, whereas its congener is restricted to the higher ranges of the southern Western Ghats below the Palghat gap.

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21. REDISCOVERY OF CRITICALLY ENDANGERED AIR BREATHING CATFISH *CLARIAS DAYI* HORA PISCES: CLARIDAE, AT MUDUMALAI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, TAMIL NADU

During fieldwork at Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu, as part of our research program on "Diversity, Ecological Structure and Conservation of Threatened fishes of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR)" we collected two specimens of air-breathing catfish *Clarias dayi* Hora, from Ombatta Swamp, a part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The species is commonly called the Malabar Clariid and Magur and popularly known as Masarai in Tamil and Muzhi in Malayalam. It was originally described from Wynaad in Kerala. The present collection is a rediscovery after 64 years at a new locality.

Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary is situated

in the Western Ghats of Nilgiri district, Tamil Nadu (11° 30'-11° 39' N; 76° 27'-76° 43' E). Its total area is 321 sq. km, including 103 sq. km of the National Park. Ombatta Todu forms Ombatta swamp before it joins Bidar halla, a tributary of river Moyar, the main water source for Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary.

Earlier record

Clarias dussumieri (nec Valenciennes) Day (partim), 1877, Fishes of India: 484; Day (partim), 1889, Fauna of British India, Fishes 1: 117.

Clarias Dayi Hora, 1936, Rec. Indian Mus.